LITTLE BOOKS
FOR AFRICA

NSANGI AND THE APES

Mrs. Baskerville

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NSANGI AND THE APES

AND OTHER STORIES FROM
UGANDA

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THE STORY OF NSANGI AND THE APES

ONCE upon a time, far away upon the mountains, there was a village in which the people were very unhappy, for some huge apes came every day and stole little children. There was one poor widow woman who had three little girls, and she hid them away in her house and never let them go out for fear the apes might see them. But every day her fears grew that she might lose her children, as other people in the village had lost theirs, and the little girls were growing weak and thin, because they never went outside their dark house, and never got any fresh air or sunshine.

At last the woman went to an old wise tortoise and asked him, "Tell me what I can do to save my children from the apes." And the tortoise said, "Apes never take children who are over twelve years old. If you can hide your little girls till then no apes will touch them, but I should advise you to take them away to a cave in the mountain side where they will get fresh air and room to run about."

So the tortoise showed the woman a cave. It was big and airy, and had a little entrance which could be closed by a stone inside and could not be opened from the outside, and there the woman took her three little girls and showed them how to close the entrance when she had gone, and she told them *not* to open the door to *anyone* except herself. "I will

come every day with a basket of food," she said, "and I will sing a song as I come so that you will know it is me. If anyone comes to the door who does not sing my song do not open it."

The next day the woman brought a basket of food and she sang this song as she climbed up the mountain path :

Three in a cave,
Three in a cave,
Only three in a cave.
All day long while the sun is shining,
All night long while the moon is shining,
Only three in a cave,
Only three in a cave.

When the eldest girl was twelve years old the woman took her home and the two younger ones longed for the years to pass when they might leave the cave too (for they had no playmates but the lizards) ; but it was not safe till they were twelve years old, and the only glimpse they got of the outside world was when they opened the door for their mother, who now sang as she came :

Two in a cave,
Two in a cave,
Only two in a cave.
All day long while the sun is shining,
All night long while the moon is shining,
Only two in a cave,
Only two in a cave.

Then the day came when the second girl was twelve years old, and only the little one, whose name was Nsangi, was left in the cave. She was lonely and cried very much, for now she had no one but the lizards to play with ; but her mother said, "I will come earlier and stay longer with you every day, for

now your sisters are at home and can do the work there."

Now, there was one old ape who saw the two little girls digging in their garden and wondered where they had come from, for he had never seen children in that house, and he watched and saw the woman go up the mountain path with a basket of food, and as she climbed she sang:

One in a cave,
One in a cave,
Only one in a cave.
All day long while the sun is shining,
All night long while the moon is shining,
Only one in a cave,
Only one in a cave.

When she arrived at the cave Nsangi ran out to meet her, and the old ape hid behind a rock quite near. For several days he listened to the woman singing, and when he thought he had learnt the song he went to the cave door and sang it; but Nsangi heard it inside the cave and was terrified, for the ape's voice was like a hoarse old crow, and her mother's voice was like a bird's. The old ape was very angry, but he went away into the forest and found a young cousin of his who was a great mimic and could copy people's voices. Together they hid behind the rock and listened while the woman sang. Nsangi ran out to meet her mother, and begged her to take her home, for the ape had been to the cave. The woman was very distressed, but she said, "I must go home and tell your sisters, and I will stay with you till you are twelve years old. Your sisters can bring us a basket of food every day. I must go now and make arrangements."

When she had gone the apes went after her, sprinkling sharp thorns on the path, and then they hurried to the cave, and the young one sang, copying the woman's voice. Perhaps it was not *exactly* right, but Nsangi was too frightened to notice little mistakes. She was so glad that her mother had returned so quickly that she opened the door at once. The apes caught her and carried her away, right into the middle of the forest. She cried all the way, and wherever her tears fell little white flowers sprang into blossom. Meanwhile her mother had made all arrangements at home and was returning to the cave, but every now and then she had to stop to take a thorn out of her foot, and this delayed her. At last she reached the cave and found it empty, and the lizards told her what had happened, and they told her to follow the trail of the little white flowers which were Nsangi's tears.

The poor woman hurried back to the village and told the people what had happened, and the men came out with spears and knives to hunt the apes, and they followed the trail of little white flowers right into the middle of the forest, and here they found a big tree which was the King Ape's palace. Up this tree the apes had carried Nsangi; but as they dragged her up, her foot was caught on a sharp branch and the blood dropped down on to a creeper with thick green leaves, and wherever a drop of blood fell a beautiful crimson flower blossomed, like a convolvulus, only with thick soft petals. The men prepared to make a big fire round the tree, and when the apes saw that their King's palace was going to be burnt they all collected to defend it, and

there was a great battle and all the apes were killed; and Nsangi climbed down the big tree, and then the men lighted a fire and burnt it to the ground. That was the end of the King Ape's palace.

And since that day apes have been afraid to go near villages or steal children, for their mothers always tell them what happened to the King Ape's palace.

But the birds and bees carried the seeds of the little white flowers all over the country, and the old people call them "Nsangi's tears," and you can still see the crimson creeper with flowers like a convolvulus, only with thick soft petals, but you must search for it in the deep forests. Some people have never seen it, but there are some people who never see anything.

THE QUITS OF GOMBA

THERE was a battle going on round the village of Gomba.

In the village there was a lame man who had never walked. Every morning he was carried out into the sunny courtyard and every evening he was carried back to his house; but the battle was raging, and no one remembered the lame man. As he lay in his house he saw a blind man passing by, and a sudden thought struck him. He called to the blind man:

"Come here, my friend, I have something important to tell you." The blind man groped his way with his long stick till he stood before the lame man, who said:

"Listen, my friend: no one has remembered us during the battle, and assuredly we shall die, you who are blind, and I who am lame; but I have a plan. Take me on your back, and we will escape from the village. I will be eyes to you, and you shall be feet to me."

The blind man agreed to the plan and hoisted the lame man on his back, and they escaped from Gomba. When they reached safety the blind man said: "Give me a reward, for I have saved your life."

But the lame man said, "Not so, it was I who saved yours." They spoke hot and angry words to each other, and at last they decided to take the case to the Chief's Council. But when the Chief heard it, he said: "There is no case; the lame man was eyes

to the blind, and the blind man was feet to the lame; both have saved their lives, which in itself is a great reward. The words are finished."

And now this has become a proverb in Uganda. When two men quarrel and both of them are in the right (or in the wrong), the people say, "It is a case of the Quits of Gomba."

The Lame man & the Blind man join forces

THE STORY OF KINTU

ONCE upon a time, a very long while ago, there were no people in the country of Uganda except one man, and his name was Kintu. He had one cow, and this cow was his great friend, but he was very lonely all by himself on the Earth.

Now up in the sky there was a lovely kingdom called the Cloud Land, and the King was called Gulu. He had many sons and daughters, and these children used to wait for a rainbow to touch the Earth, and then they would slide down it and stay a little while below, playing among the trees; but they couldn't stay long, for a rainbow very soon melts away in the hot Sun, and if they had waited too long they could not have climbed home to the Cloud Land. One day two of Gulu's sons saw a rainbow touching the Earth, and they called to their sister Nambi to come with them. Nambi was a very beautiful girl, and the King Gulu loved her very much. She went quickly with her brothers and slid down to the Earth, and the part of the Earth the rainbow touched was Uganda, and there they saw Kintu sitting all alone watching his cow graze. At first they were rather frightened, for they had never seen a man before, but they soon made friends with Kintu, and they stayed a long time talking to him. He told them how lonely he was, and Nambi, who had a tender heart, was very sorry for him, and she said: "I will come back again and marry you, and then

you won't be lonely any more in this beautiful country." When they were on their way home the brothers reproved Nambi; they said: "Why did you say that? You know our father Gulu will never allow you to go away and marry Kintu."

But Nambi said: "I *will* go, I promised Kintu, and my father would never wish me to break my promise. I will go home now and tell my father, and then pack up all my things, and go to the Earth to live there always."

When they arrived back in the Cloud Land they told Gulu all they had done, and Nambi told him that she had promised to marry Kintu, and go and live on the Earth. At first Gulu was angry, but at last he gave his consent, but on one condition. He said to Nambi: "If you want to be happy on the Earth you must go secretly; pack your things very carefully, and these two brothers will go with you and see that you arrive safely; but, whatever you do, you must not tell any of the others that you are going. If your brother Death, whom we call Walumbe, hears of it, he will want to go with you, and he will spoil your beautiful Earth."

So Nambi and her two brothers packed all her things in bundles, and she said good-bye to her father, and they started down a rainbow. Suddenly Nambi stopped. "Oh, I have forgotten the millet seed for my fowls," she said, "and as Kintu has no fowls he will have no millet seed, and my fowls will die; I must hurry back and fetch it." She went back quickly and found the little parcel of seeds, and just as she was starting for the rainbow again she met her brother Walumbe. "Where are you going?"

he asked. Nambi was very frightened, and at first she would not tell him, but Walumbe would not go away. "Where you go I am going too," he said.

"You cannot come with me," cried poor Nambi. "I am going to the Earth, and our father said you were not to go with me."

"Oh, ho!" said Walumbe, "so you have tried to have a secret from me; well, you can go off, but I shall come and visit you and your man Kintu very soon."

Poor Nambi cried very much, and when she came to the place where her brothers were waiting for her she told them. They were horrified and afraid what their father Gulu might say, and they said to Nambi, "If you had not been disobedient this would not have happened"; but as nothing could be done they all slid down the rainbow to the Earth, and Nambi soon forgot her tears when she met Kintu again and saw how happy she had made him by coming back.

Then the brothers said good-bye to her and went home, and Nambi began to make her new life. She untied the bundle of banana stalks and showed Kintu how to plant them in rows wide apart, for she said: "They will spread and need room to grow"; then she planted a barkcloth branch from which in time she showed Kintu how to make barkcloth, and she sowed some of the millet seed, so that her fowls should always have food; and she and Kintu were very busy and very happy and loved each other very much.

Then one day Walumbe came down to see them, and Nambi was very frightened. She told Kintu all about him and said: "We must get rid of him at all

costs; my father Gulu told me he would spoil our happiness." But nothing would induce Walumbe to go away, and at last Kintu promised him: "If you will go away, not to return, I will give you my first child"; and then he went back. Kintu and Nambi lived many years happily together and had many sons and daughters, and Kintu forgot all about his promise. At last, one day, Walumbe came back and claimed his child. Kintu was very angry and tried to drive him away, but this time Walumbe would not go, and he said, "As you did not keep your promise and give me your first child, now I will stay on the Earth always, and I will take what I want." And although Kintu and Nambi had so many children and grandchildren and great-grandchildren that Uganda was soon full of people, still every now and then cruel Walumbe came and took one away, sometimes an old man and sometimes a young one and sometimes a little baby. But still the country of Uganda is full of people who have beautiful banana gardens, and many cows and fowls, and little fat children with skins like chocolate, and the rainbows still come down from the Cloud Land and touch the Earth, as they did in the days when Nambi played with her brothers.

KINTU AND THE FAIRY BEE

BEFORE Nambi came to live on the Earth, when Kintu was quite alone, he made friends with a bumble-bee. There had been a great rainstorm, and the poor bee fell to the ground on his back and could not get up again, and the heavy raindrops beat on him and very soon he would have died of cold, but Kintu picked him up and held him in his warm hand; and soon the bumble-bee revived and said to Kintu: "You have saved my life; I will always be your friend and help you when you are in trouble."

One morning he woke up and found that his cow was gone; he could not find it anywhere. Then the bumble-bee came to him and said: "I will help you find your cow; it has been stolen by the herdsmen of a wizard who lives on the Mountains of the Moon." So Kintu took his stick and set out on his long journey to the far-away mountains where the snow never melts, and the bumble-bee flew before him to show him the way. On they went, day after day, through dark forests and over wide rivers, and by narrow paths through the jungle grass, until they saw the Mountains of the Moon in the far distance. Then the bumble-bee said: "Do everything that I tell you, for you will never be able to outwit the old wizard and his people by yourself, and if you do not prove yourself cleverer than they are, they will never give you back your cow." When they arrived

in the wizard's country and the great mountains were towering above them, Kintu saw what a rich country it was—great herds of cattle and flocks of sheep and goats, and beautiful gardens, and many people. When the wizard heard that Kintu had arrived, he sent for him and said: "Are you really Kintu, the man who lives all alone with a cow?" And Kintu said: "Yes, I am, and your people have stolen my cow, and I have come to find it." Then the wizard wondered very much, and said to his people: "This is a very wonderful man; we will see what marvels he can do. How did he find his way from Uganda? and how did he know that you stole his cow while he was asleep, for there was no one to tell him? We will test him and see if he is really a wise man." So they gave him a house to rest in, and said they would bring him some supper. Kintu rested a little while, and then to his surprise, ten thousand people arrived, each carrying a basket of cooked food.

"The wizard has sent you your supper," they said, and put down the ten thousand baskets. "Thank them very much," whispered the bee in Kintu's ear, "and tell them to come back in a little while and fetch their baskets when you have finished your supper." So the people went away wondering very much: "Is it possible for one man to eat so much?" Then the bee called all the ants in the country: the red ants which live in the forests and are always hungry, for they can eat a dead elephant if they find it; and the white ants who build big castles for themselves of red earth, which look like huts on the hill-sides, and in the middle of the castle

is a beautiful room with smooth walls where their Queen lives; and the large black ants which run very fast and lose their way every two minutes and run back again to find it; and the little black ants who are always silently watching everywhere, though one does not see them, and run out quickly to pick up a crumb or a seed or a grain of corn directly they see it on the ground. All these came, millions and millions and millions of them, and they carried away the food, until the baskets were all empty except one, which Kintu ate for his supper. Then the people came back, and they shouted when they saw the empty baskets piled up together. "Can one man eat so much? This man is a wizard."

When the old wizard heard it he said: "Let him sleep, to-morrow we will give him another test." In the morning they brought him a brass axe and said: "Our chief likes rocks for his fire; go and cut firewood from the rocks and bring it tied up in bundles." Then the bee flew before him as he climbed up the mountain-side and brought him to a rock that had been struck all into splinters by lightning, and he tied the splinters together with grass and returned, and all the people wondered very much, and said: "This must be Kintu, the man who lives by himself."

Then they brought him a water-pot and said: "Our chief does not drink water, he only drinks dew. Go and fill this pot in the forest." So Kintu climbed up the mountain, and this time the journey was very long; seven peaks they climbed and then they came to the bamboo forest. The bumble-bee flew before him and cheered him on and told the shiver-

ing bamboos who he was, and as he walked the bamboos whispered : " This is Kintu, let us help him ; this is Kintu, this is Kintu."

Then the bumble-bee showed him a hole in a rock, and all the bamboos shook their branches at once, and the hole was filled with dew, and Kintu filled his water-pot and returned. Then the old wizard laughed and said : " You are a marvellous man ! I will not tease you any more ; if you can recognize your cow in my herd, you shall take it and go home to Uganda."

So all the herds were collected, and Kintu was told to find his cow, and the bumble-bee flew before him as he made his way between the cows—thousands and thousands of cows, with long horns all standing upright. Then the bumble-bee alighted on the horn of a cow, and Kintu saw it was his old friend, and he drove it out of the herd and showed it to the wizard and his people and said : " This is my cow that they stole from me while I slept," and he said good-bye to them, and the bumble-bee showed him the way home to Uganda.

And to-day if you go to the Mountains of the Moon and climb up to the bamboo forests, the trees will lean down to see you and whisper to each other : " This is Kintu, this is Kintu, this is Kintu !" for they remember the first man they ever saw, and think he has come back.

THE STORY OF MPOBE THE HUNTER

ONCE upon a time there lived a man called Mpobe; he was a hunter, and he had a dog which went hunting with him. The jungle is very thick in the Uganda forests, so Mpobe tied a little bell to his dog for fear he should lose it. When they had been hunting for some time, a little animal called a musu ran out of the jungle grass, and the dog gave chase, and Mpobe ran after the dog.

On they went through the jungle, and it seemed as if the musu would never be caught. At last it ran into a hole and the dog followed it, and when Mpobe came up he found the hole looked like the entrance to a tunnel, and, as he heard the dog's bell tinkling far away, he ran into the hole and followed it. On and on they went in the dark, down into the Earth, and Mpobe ran on because he still heard the bell, and he wanted to catch the musu. All hunters in every country are like this; they do not like to go home and say they have killed nothing.

Suddenly the tunnel came to an end, and Mpobe found himself in a country right down in the centre of the Earth. It was a beautiful country, with lovely gardens and trees and flowers and rivers, and flocks of sheep and goats and herds of cattle were grazing in the green fields. Still the musu ran on and the dog ran after it, and Mpobe followed them, looking from side to side as he ran, and wondering at all he saw. At last they came to a courtyard, and Mpobe followed them into it; the dog

had not caught the musu. They were just resting quietly together in front of a very old man who sat all alone in the middle of the courtyard. Mpobe knelt down and greeted the old man, who said to him: "What are you doing here, and why have you come?"

"Sir," said Mpobe, "I do not know where I am. This is my dog, and we were hunting this musu above in the jungle, and the musu ran into a hole and my dog followed it, and I followed the dog, and we arrived here."

Then the old man said: "Do you know who I am? I am Walumbe, and when I go to the Earth and carry away people and cows and sheep and goats, I bring them all down here to my beautiful country of Death; but no one can go back again, and you and the musu and your dog must stay here for ever."

Then Mpobe cried bitterly and implored Walumbe to allow him to return. "I will not stay long," he said. "I will come back soon; just let me go and say good-bye to my friends."

Walumbe said: "I will let you go on one condition. You must tell nobody what you have seen or where you have been. If you will promise me to keep this secret, you may go back, but as sure as you tell it to anyone I will come for you, and then you must return here."

Mpobe promised gladly, and the old man showed him the way back. When he got home his mother and his wife and his relations rejoiced very much, because he had been away three days and they thought he was lost in the jungle, and they asked him where he had been and what he had seen, and to all he

answered the same. "I was hunting a musu and I lost my way." This went on for many days, and he would tell them nothing, so they got tired of asking him; but one day he was alone in the house with his old mother and she asked him again: "Mpobe, my child, tell me what you saw in the jungle"; and he said: "I cannot tell you; I promised I would keep it quite secret"; and his mother said: "Whom did you promise, my child? Cannot you tell your old mother a little about it?"

Then Mpobe said: "Will you promise to tell no one if I tell you where I went and what I saw those three days in the jungle?" And the old woman said: "Whom should I tell, my child? Is not my heart yours?"

Then Mpobe told her all about his hunting and the musu and the tunnel, and the wonderful country in the middle of the Earth, and the very old man who was Walumbe.

That night, when everything was quiet and still, Mpobe heard a voice calling, "Mpobe! Mpobe!" And then he answered; and the voice said: "I am Walumbe; you have broken your promise, you must come with me, and this time there is no return." So they went away together into the jungle.

In the morning when his friends found that Mpobe was gone they wondered if he was hunting again; but his old mother told them the story, and they all went into the jungle and looked for the tunnel which leads to Walumbe's country. But though they searched for it and many other people have searched for it since then, no one has ever found it, and no one has ever seen Walumbe when he visits the Earth.

THE STORY OF KIBATE

ONCE upon a time there was a man called Kibate who had a great many friends.

Now Kibate wanted to build a house, and he asked his friends about it, and everyone gave him different advice, till at last Kibate thought: "If I take the advice of all my friends my house will be a very queer one, and if I take the advice of one or two the others will be jealous. I had better build my house all alone."

So he went away into the jungle and made a clearing, and lived there alone until his house was finished; and as it took a long time to build, Kibate learnt many things, and he made friends with the beasts and birds and trees, and learnt their language.

When his house was finished he made a great feast and called all his friends, and they came gladly, for they had wondered where he was all that time, and some said he was lost.

Everyone praised the house except one man, and he said:

"Kibate, you need one more pole in the roof; if you do not put in one more pole your house will fall down." And he showed him where the pole should go.

And Kibate saw that he was right, and said: "I will go into the forest at once and cut a pole. Will you stay here until I come back and help me put it up?" And his friend promised: "I will sit here until you come back."

Then Kibate took his spear and an axe and went

into the forest, and he was just going to cut a branch when the tree cried out:

"Kibate, would you hurt an old friend?" So he went to another tree, and it cried out:

"Do not hurt me, Kibate; are we not friends?"

And every tree said the same thing. And Kibate went on and on through the forest, but could not find a tree that was not his friend.

At last he was quite tired out, and then he found he had lost his way, and he sat down to think what he should do next.

Just then he heard a rustling in the forest, and a great snake with seven heads came out of the bushes.

Kibate had never seen such a wonderful thing before, and he was more surprised still when each head spoke to him:

"Kibate, the King will send for you."

"Kibate, you shall be a great chief."

"Kibate, you shall be a great warrior."

"Kibate, all Uganda shall hear of you."

"Kibate, the generations to come will praise you."

"Kibate, you shall make fire for the army."

"Kibate, you shall make a rhinoceros laugh."

Then the snake went back again into the bushes, and Kibate got up feeling quite rested, and wondered whether he had really seen the snake or whether he had been asleep and dreamt it.

Very soon he found a way out of the forest and came to a road where many people were passing to and fro.

He asked one man: "Where are all these people going?" And the man told him:

"The King of Uganda is going to war with the King of Ankole, and every man who stays at home will be punished." So Kibate joined the soldiers and went to the war with his spear and his axe.

They marched for many days until they reached the country of Ankole, and then they built a big camp of huts in a wide plain. The next day a dreadful storm fell upon them, and it rained for three nights and three days without stopping, and the camp was soaked and all their things were soaked, and when the rain stopped and the tired soldiers hoped to cook some food there was no fire in the whole camp, so they ate a little raw food and tried to sleep.

But in the night the chief saw a fire on a distant hill, and he woke his men and told them to go there and bring back a pot full of fire with them. So a company of men set out, and when they came to the hill-top they found that the fire was on the horn of a rhinoceros. They begged the rhinoceros to give them some fire, but it said: "It is very dull living alone on the hill-top; the man who can tell me a funny story shall take the fire from my horn."

The men thought and thought, but none of them could think of a funny story, so they had to go back to the camp without the fire. The chief was much troubled, and he sent a proclamation through the army that the man who could tell a funny story to the rhinoceros should be given a chieftainship when the war was over.

When Kibate heard this he volunteered to go all alone and fetch the fire. He reached the distant hill and found the rhinoceros looking out gloomily

over the plain, very bored and cross, so he began to tell a story at once :

" Once upon a time there was a king who had no feet."

When the rhinoceros heard this he began to laugh.

" What did the king do ?" he asked.

" He walked on his hands," said Kibate.

The rhinoceros laughed and laughed until his sides ached, and Kibate took the fire and kindled the wood in his pot until he had quite a nice blaze, and then he went down to the plain. When he looked back he saw the rhinoceros still laughing on the hill-top ! Perhaps you don't think that was a funny story, but, you see, Kibate had lived so long in the jungle that he knew just the sort of story a rhinoceros would find amusing.

Kibate returned to the camp and the soldiers made their fires and cooked their food, and the next day they fought a great battle and defeated the army of the King of Ankole.

When the war was over the King sent for Kibate and gave him a chieftainship, and all the soldiers went to their homes and told their relations how Kibate had saved the army, and Kibate went home to his house in the jungle clearing to get his things, and there he found his friend sitting just where he had left him, but he had grown very old, for he had sat there thinking all the time, and thinking always makes people get very old.

THE STORY OF THE FROG

If a frog comes into a house in Uganda and you call a boy and say, "Drive that frog away," he will not do so, but he goes and calls a married man who drives the frog into the garden, and if you ask the boy:

"Are you afraid of frogs?" he will say, "No; but it is our custom to call a married man to drive one out of the house."

Now I will tell you how this became a custom. Long ago there was a widow who had a beautiful daughter, and they lived in a round hut in a banana garden. One day the girl saw a frog in the road. The poor creature was panting along in the sun, for it was midday and there was no shade. Every moment it grew weaker, and soon it would have fainted, but the girl picked it up and carried it into her shady banana garden and put it down in a pool of water where it soon revived. The next day as the girl was peeling bananas in the kitchen she heard a croak at the door and there was the frog.

"Good-morning," he said, "I have come to thank you for saving my life. Some day I may be able to repay your kindness."

They became great friends, and the frog came every day to the kitchen and told the girl many stories about the animals. One day he noticed that she looked sad. "What is your sorrow?" he said. "Cannot you tell your friend?" So the girl told him.

"My guardians are arranging for my marriage, and there are four men who want to marry me, and I do not know which to choose."

The frog said, "Now, I will give you some advice. Choose a man who has a kind heart: that is greater wealth than flocks and herds and a great chieftainship."

But the girl said, "How am I to know which one has a kind heart?"

Then the frog said, "We will make a little plan and find out. I know that *you* have a kind heart because you saved my life. I will help you to choose a man who is kind to animals. If he is kind to animals he will be kind to you."

So they arranged a plan, and the girl went to her guardian, and said, "I want to choose my husband for myself. I want the four men to come one by one, on an appointed day, and I will choose."

The guardian consented, and they arranged a day, and laid freshly cut grass down in the house, and the girl dressed herself in a beautiful barkcloth, and sat on a new mat, and three old ladies of her father's tribe sat near her to see that everything was done properly and in order. But they knew nothing about the frog.

As the first lover entered the porch the frog hopped out in front of him and croaked. He drove it away angrily and went into the house, and the girl refused him at once. This happened to three young men, and as the fourth entered the porch he stepped carefully over the frog, and when he had greeted the girl and the old ladies, he said, "There is a frog in the porch, does the croaking annoy you?"

"Not at all," said the girl; "I like frogs."

"I am glad of that," said the young man, "for I like frogs too." Then they both burst out laughing, which was a very improper thing to do, and shocked the old ladies very much; but it made them friends, and the girl decided to marry him, and they lived happy ever after.

That is why a boy will never drive away a frog. He thinks that if he does so the girl he wants to marry will refuse him.

THE CHEATS OF KIJONGO

ONCE there was a man who was a cheat, and he wandered round the country selling his goods in markets where no one knew him, and everywhere he cheated. One day he collected a lot of rags and bits of soft rubbish and made them into a neat roll, and put it all into a small piece of good barkcloth and rolled it up and tied it beautifully with broad barkcloth ribbons, until it looked like a roll of real good barkcloth yards and yards long. Then he went to a market called Kijongo. Now, there happened to come to the same market that day another man who was a cheat. In Uganda the people eat white ants, and like them very much. They taste something like shrimps, and you cannot get them all the year round, only when the rains begin, twice a year. Then the people put a framework of reeds over the anthills and cover this with barkcloth and the ants swarm in the barkcloth.

Then they are taken to the courtyards, all the wings are removed, and the ants fried ; they are a great delicacy. The ants have long white wings which are thrown away. This cheat had collected a lot of ants' wings and made them into a nice parcel with banana fibre, and on the top he put a few real fried ants and went to market, where he met the first cheat trying to sell his barkcloth.

" Will you buy white ants ?" he said. The other man was hungry and said, " I don't want to buy them, but I will exchange my roll of barkcloth for

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them " ; and they agreed to exchange. Both went home very happy, but imagine their surprise when each opened his bargain and found he had been cheated.

This has become a proverb in Uganda. When a sharp deal is done and the dealer is disappointed, the people say, "It is a case of the cheats who met at Kijongo market," and if you know this story you understand what they mean.

THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

ONCE upon a time there was a man who had a most beautiful garden round his house. The soil was so good that everything in his garden was larger and better than any in the neighbourhood. His women did all the work, and he just showed off his garden to visitors, and because he was bad tempered they flattered him, and he became so proud and arrogant that one day he said :

" When Kintu, the first man, planted a garden he made some big mistakes. Had I been there I would have advised him very well, for look, this large pumpkin is growing on a small creeping plant, and those small plums on that great plum-tree. I should have put the pumpkin on the plum-tree and the plums on a small plant."

And because his friends were afraid of him, they said how wise he was and flattered him more than ever. The next day he was sitting under his plum-tree when a plum dropped down and hit him in the eye and hurt him very much. He had to have his eye tied up and could not bear the light for some days. While he was sitting in the dark he had time to think, and he said to his friends, " What a foolish man I was to think I knew more than Kintu the first man, and how foolish you are to flatter me, for had a pumpkin fallen from the plum-tree I might have been killed !" After this he became wiser and his friends left off flattering him.

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